Claims

1. A network device for connection in a communication path of a network includes a controller operable to detect a predetermined tag within content passing along the path and to report said detection together with information identifying a sender and/or recipient of said content.

2. A method of monitoring content transmitted over a network comprises detecting a predetermined tag within content passing through the network and reporting said detection together with information identifying a sender and/or recipient of said content.

3. A computer program product for carrying out the method according to claim 2 comprising: a computer readable medium;
program code in said computer readable medium for detecting a predetermined tag within a content passing through a network;
program code in said computer readable medium for reporting said detection together with information identifying at least one of the following: a sender of said content, a recipient of said content.

4. A system for monitoring the transmission of content between networked terminals comprises, a network device located in a communication path of a network and a monitoring centre connected to said device wherein a controller included in said device is operable to detect a predetermined tag

within content in said path and to report said detection together with information identifying a sender and/or recipient of said content to said centre.

5. A system as claimed in Claim 4, wherein the monitoring centre is operable to receive reports from a plurality of networks each having at least one controller.

6. A system as claimed in Claim 4, further including a billing entity connected to said centre.

7. A revenue collection system for collecting revenue due on content passing through a network, comprises a network device located in a communication path of said network and a monitoring centre connected to said network device wherein said network device is operable to detect a predetermined tag within content in said path and to report said detection together with information identifying a sender and/or recipient of said content to said centre, the centre being operable to issue a request to a billing entity to carry out a transaction in relation to said sender and/or recipient.

8. A system as claimed in Claim 7 wherein the transaction comprises debiting an account of said sender and/or recipient.

9. A system as claimed in Claim 7, wherein said information includes a network identity such that said centre issues said request to a billing entity responsible for said identified network.

10. A revenue collection method for collecting revenue due on predetermined content transmitted over a network comprises detecting said predetermined content, obtaining an address of a sender and/or recipient of said content and requesting a billing entity to carry out a transaction in relation to said sender and/or recipient.

11. A method as claimed in Claim 10, wherein said transaction comprises debiting an account of said sender and/or recipient

12. A method as claimed in Claim 10, including the preliminary step of determining which content revenue is to be collected by associating a tag with said content prior to making it available for transmission.

13. A method as claimed in Claim 12, wherein said predetermined content is captured on a data carrier.

14. A method of transmitting a message incorporating content including an embedded tag from a terminal connected to a network comprises, obtaining content, placing said content into a payload portion of said message, and

transmitting said message over a network including a device as claimed in Claim 1.

15. A method as claimed in Claim 14, wherein the content is obtained by downloading from a server.

16. A method as claimed in Claim 14, wherein the content is obtained from a data carrier by uploading from a suitable player.

17. A method as claimed in any one of Claim 14, wherein said message comprises one or more packets.

18. A method as claimed in claim 17, wherein said tag is embedded to at least one of the packets

19. A method of creating content for controlled distribution over a network comprises, generating content, determining a right holder and updating a corresponding right holder record with details of said content and associating a tag with said content wherein said tag is detectable by a device as claimed in Claim 1.

20. A computer program comprising executable code for execution when loaded on a computer, wherein the computer is operable in accordance with said code to carry out the method according to Claim 2.

21. A computer program comprising executable code for execution when loaded on a computer, wherein the computer is operable in accordance with said code to carry out the method according to Claim 10.

22. A computer program comprising executable code for execution when loaded on a computer, wherein the computer is operable in accordance with said code to carry out the method according to Claim 14.

23. A computer program comprising executable code for execution when loaded on a computer, wherein the computer is operable in accordance with said code to carry out the method according to Claim 19.

24. A program as claimed in Claim 20, stored in a computer readable medium.

25. A method of generating a control message by a network device to be sent to a monitoring centre connected to the said device, the message indicating the passing of a content having a predetermined tag embedded within the content through the network device, the control message comprising an identification of the content originating device, a destination address for the content, and a flag created by the network device.

26. A method as claimed in Claim 25, wherein the flag identifies the network device.